

REMARKS**I. INTRODUCTION**

Claims 24-27 have been added. Claims 9-27 are now pending in the present application. Claims 9, 14, 15, 18 and 19 have been amended to clarify the subject matter recited therein. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration of the present application is requested.

II. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 14 AND 18-19 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112, SECOND PARAGRAPH

Claims 14 and 18-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

With respect to claim 14, it is respectfully submitted that the Office Action incorrectly recites the claim. Claim 14 actually recites, "each connecting section of each contact element is one of partially extrusion-coated with plastic to form the housing and clamped between two halves of the housing," i.e., either partially extrusion-coated or clamped. (Emphasis added; the underlined words were omitted in the Office Action.) This phrase, read in its entirety, is in accord with the specification, which provides that a contact set 14 of connector 11 may be partially extrusion-coated with plastic or clamped between two halves of housing 16. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Applicants have amended claim 14 for further clarify the subject matter recited therein.

With regard to claims 18 and 19, these claims have been amended to correct the typographical error, replacing the words, "tie bar," with the word, "crossbar," as provided in the Specification.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 14 and 18-19 meet the clarity and precision requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and it is respectfully requested that the rejection of these claims be withdrawn.

III. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 9-12 AND 14 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 9-12 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,066,236 to Broeksteeg ("Broeksteeg"). Applicants respectfully submit that Broeksteeg does not anticipate claims 9-12 and 14 for at least the following reasons.

Claim 9 recites a **multipole electrical connector** having contact elements which are arranged in a single plane and form a single-layer stamped grid. Claims 10-12 and 14 depend from claim 9.

Broeksteeg relates to an impedance matched backplane connector. Fig. 8 of Broeksteeg shows, for example, a **terminal** subassembly. Broeksteeg does not disclose, or even suggest, a multipole connector; nor is there any suggestion that the terminal subassembly of Broeksteeg could or should be modified to form a multipole connector. Claim 9 explicitly recites a **multipole connector** which includes contact elements that are each configured to receive a **different counter-contact section of a multipole mating connector**. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Broeksteeg does not anticipate claims 9-12 and 14.

In view of at least the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 9-12 and 14 be withdrawn.

IV. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 13 AND 23 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 13 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Broeksteeg in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,196,853 to Harting et al. ("Harting"). Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Broeksteeg and Harting does not render obvious claims 13 and 23 for at least the following reasons.

Claim 13 depends from claim 9 and claim 23 depends from claim 15; accordingly, the arguments presented above in

connection with claim 9 apply equally to claims 13 and 23. Harting does not cure the deficiencies of Broeksteeg. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 13 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is therefore respectfully requested.

V. CLAIMS 15-22

Claims 15-22 have not been explicitly rejected by the Examiner over prior art. However, these claims are mentioned in connection with the rejection of claims 9-12 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Broeksteeg. Thus, it is not clear as to whether claims 15-22 are rejected over prior art; and, if so, what the basis of the rejection is. In any event, it is respectfully submitted that claims 15-22 are not anticipated or rendered obvious by Broeksteeg, or rendered obvious by Broeksteeg in view of Harting.

Claims 15-22 are directed to a method of producing a multipole electrical conductor. As discussed above in connection with claim 9, Broeksteeg relates to a backplane connector. Fig. 8 of Broeksteeg shows, for example, a terminal subassembly. There is no suggestion in Broeksteeg of producing a **multipole connector** as recited in claims 15-22. Harting does not cure the deficiencies of Broeksteeg.

It is respectfully submitted that claims 15-22 should be allowed.

VI. NEW CLAIMS

New claims 24-27 have been added. Support for the subject matter of these claims can be found throughout the disclosure, especially in the Figures.

V. CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully

submitted that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Prompt reconsideration and allowance of the present application are therefore earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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AMENDMENT VERSION WITH MARKINGS SHOWING CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

9. (Amended) A multipole electrical connector for providing a releasable coupling with a multipole mating connector, comprising:

a housing; and

a contact set supported in the housing, the contact set including a plurality of contact elements, each of the contact elements configured to receive a different counter-contact section of the multipole mating connector, each of the contact elements including a contact section and a connecting section; wherein the contact elements are arranged in a single plane and form a single-layer stamped grid.

14. (Amended) The connector according to claim 9, wherein at least each connecting section of each contact element is one of: i) partially extrusion-coated with plastic to form the housing, and ii) clamped between two halves of the housing.

15. (Amended) A method of producing a multipole electrical connector, the method comprising:

producing a contact set from a single metal strip, the contact set including a plurality of contact elements, each of the contact elements including a contact section and a connecting section, each of the contact elements configured to receive a different counter-contact section of a multipole mating connector, the contact elements being arranged in a single plane and forming a single-layer stamped grid; and supporting the contact set within a housing.

18. (Amended) The method according to claim 15, wherein the step of producing the contact set includes producing at least

one [tie bar] crossbar between the plurality of contact elements.

19. (Amended) The method according to claim 18, further comprising:

removing the at least one [tie bar] crossbar.

Please add the following new claims:

24. (New) A multipole electrical connector for providing a releasable coupling with a multipole mating connector, comprising:

a housing; and

a contact set supported in the housing, the contact set including a plurality of contact elements, each of the contact elements including a contact section and a connecting section, a first one of the contact elements being configured to receive a first counter-contact section of the multipole mating connector, and a second one of the contact elements being configured to receive a second counter contact section of the multipole mating connector, the second counter contact section being oriented in a different direction than the first counter contact section; wherein the contact elements are arranged in a single plane and form a single-layer stamped grid.

25. (New) The connector according to claim 25, wherein the first counter contact section and the second counter contact section are oriented perpendicularly relative to one another.

26. (New) A method of producing a multipole electrical connector, the method comprising:

producing a contact set from a single metal strip, the contact set including a plurality of contact elements, each of the contact elements including a contact section and a

connecting section, each of the contact elements configured to receive a different counter-contact section of a multipole mating connector, a first one of the contact elements being configured to receive a first counter-contact section of a multipole mating connector, and a second one of the contact elements being configured to receive a second counter contact section of the multipole mating connector, the second counter contact section being oriented in a different direction than the first counter contact section, the contact elements being arranged in a single plane and forming a single-layer stamped grid; and

supporting the contact set within a housing.

27. (New) The method according to claim connector according to claim 26, wherein the first counter contact section and the second counter contact section are oriented perpendicularly relative to one another.